ARMY MOVING SLOWLY WITH LSD FOLLOWUP

Of 745 Drug Subjects, Only 127 Have Completed Tests—'No Unusual Discoveries' Are Reported

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SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 18—Two years ago when Congress learned that hundreds of Americans were given the hallucinogenic drug LSD under programs set up by the Army in the 1950's and 1960's, the Surgeon General of the Army promised to do followup tests on Army personnel who had been administered the drug.

The Army now reports that, of the 745 people who have been identified as subjects in the LSD tests, 127 have completed the physical and psychological testing program set up at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Another 176 persons have agreed to take examinations but their tests have been held up pending results of the earlier tests, said Maj. Dale Keller, an Army spokesman. "So far there have been no unusual discoveries," Major Keller said. But he added that all the data have not yet been analyzed.

He explained that from January to July this year 50 of the LSD subjects were randomly selected and matched with the comparable control group of 50 other present or former Army personnel who had never been given LSD.

Both groups were then given five days of intensive physical and psychological tests at Walter Reed Hospital. "We have to first establish a norm, then see if the people who were given the LSD deviate from the norm," Major Keller said.

Preliminary Findings

Although the results of those comparison tests are still being examined, he said, there have been some preliminary findings. "Some of the people described flashbacks soon after the LSD experiments," he said, "but no unusual diseases were observed. The evaluation of possible brain damage is not complete for long-term effects on psychoneurological functions."

Major Keller said that four persons who had been subjects in the LSD experiments filed lawsuits against the Army in the last two years because of injuries they say they suffered in the experiments. He said that none of the suits had been resolved.

Earlier this month, recently declassified Army documents disclosed that a former American soldier stationed in France in 1961 had been given LSD unknowingly and without his consent and then intensively interrogated by an Army intelligence unit looking for stolen secret Army documents.

The former soldier, James R. Thornwell, said he had been psychologically disabled by the LSD incident and last week his attorneys asked President Carter for a public apology and compensation for Mr. Thornwell.

The 40-year-old former Army clerk, who now lives in Oakland, Calif., and is unemployed, said that he had been trying for 16 years to find out what happened to him in 1961. Then in March of 1976 the Internal Revenue Service informed him by letter that the Army Surgeon General would contact him for a drug followup program.

He hired an attorney who wrote the Army but did not receive any information bout Mr. Thornwell until this month when the documents were obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

Major Keller acknowledged that the Army did not respond to Mr. Thornwell's attorney for more than a year. He said it was because the followup program was not in effect when the attorney first wrote.

Breakdown on Followup

Major Keller said that, of the 568 peragreed to be tested, including the 127 tested so far, 146 were undecided or had not responded; 39 had refused to be examined and 22 were dead. He said that 58 more were in the Air Force and were being handled there.

He said that because of the lapse in time since the LSD experiments, which ended in 1967, the Army had required the help of other Government agencies to find the personnel. Because of the privacy act, this was done by sending a sealed letter with a return address to an agency such as the Internal Revenue Service to be forwarded to the person.

There are also hundreds of civilians who were given LSD under Army contract programs, most of which will never be contacted, Major Keller said. There were 54 Army contracts for "nerve agent" and "incompacitating agent" studies, some of which involved LSD, he said.

"The Army received responses from three of four universities involved in Army contract LSD experiments," he added. "Only one contractor did a followup study and no detrimental side effects were found in those followed up for 20 years. The two other contractors would not or could not provide information on those tested with LSD."